

**Be Reformed** – Open the bible: study, dig and ask what the main point of the passage is

**Be Charismatic** – Expect the Holy Spirit: ask God to speak, minister, build up and lead us to maturity

**Be Community** – Love God's people: share vulnerably, apply, pray and build each other up

**Be Missional** – Win the world: apply lessons to outreach, make content accessible to non-Christians

## Matthew 12:38-50

**38** Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." **39** But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. **40** For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. **41** The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. **42** The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. **43** "When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. **44** Then it says, 'I will return to

my house from which I came.' And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. **45** Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation."

**46** While he was still speaking to the people, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, asking to speak to him. **48** But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" **49** And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! **50** For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

### ALSO READ

Luke 16:19-31

## Study Guide 12 June 2011 – Almost Christian: What Is and Isn't Christianity in an Age of Spirituality



### Summary

There are two types of religion – one is true obedience to God, and the other is a works-based delusion.

The Pharisees asked Jesus for a sign, not that they might have faith, but that they may test Jesus. False Christianity asks God for signs but does not believe in who He is in spite of the signs. This is spiritual greed – no sign will be enough to satisfy them or give them faith. False religion pushes us away from God by making us turn to our own spirituality for satisfaction.

False Christianity wants God to solve our problems but will not embrace and surrender to God. When we want our problems solved this way, we end up merely trading one demon for another, or worse. We replace sin with sin, suffering with suffering. Unless the Holy Spirit dwells in us (our "house") any demon or sin that leaves will only return with his friends.

Finally, Jesus' answer to his mother and brothers teaches us that it is more important to be Jesus' disciple than Jesus' relative. The spiritual family of God is more important to God than our biological family. False Christians want to be associated with Jesus, but do not want to do His will.

### Key points

True Christianity puts God above all things and is fully surrendered to Him.

### Questions

- >>Have you ever asked God for a sign? What was it for?
- >>Why did the Pharisees want a sign?
- >>Why will Nineveh and the Queen of the South condemn that generation?
- >>Do signs give us faith?
- >>How do we think God will solve our problems or make us "better people"?
- >>What is the relationship between our biological family and our spiritual family?
- >>How do we do the will of God?

### Final thoughts

Complete surrender to God is the essence of true faith, true godliness, true relationship to God and true Christianity.

